

Strategy Committee

13 December 2018

Dorset Statement of Common Ground on Strategic Planning Matters

For Decision

Portfolio Holder

Cllr I Gardner

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

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Statutory Authority

Localism Act 2011

Purpose of Report

- 1 To approve the Statement of Common Ground as part of the supporting documentation for local plans across Dorset

Recommendations

- 2 That the draft Statement of Common Ground, attached as Appendix 1, be approved

Reason for Decision

- 3 To ensure that the requirement for a Statement of Common Ground to be prepared in association with the development of local plans is met.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 The Localism Act 2011 includes the Duty to Cooperate between local planning authorities and other organisations in preparing local plans. The new National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and its associated Planning Practice Guidance introduced a new requirement for a Statement of Common Ground to be prepared.
- 5 A Statement of Common Ground is a written record of progress made on planning for strategic matters across local authority boundaries. It is intended to record where effective cooperation is or is not taking place, demonstrate that plans are deliverable, and provide evidence that the duty to cooperate has been fulfilled.

- 6 Statements should be jointly produced by those authorities which have agreed to collaborate with each other to address strategic matters across local authority boundaries.
- 7 In Dorset there is a Strategic Planning Forum comprising member representatives of all the local planning authorities, together with representatives of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnership. This group meets regularly to discuss strategic planning matters on which the authorities need to work jointly.
- 8 The Forum agreed a 'Summary of Cross-Boundary Planning Issues in Dorset' paper in 2015 and this was taken through all of the individual councils at the time for approval. The Forum agreed at its meeting in June this year that a single Statement of Common Ground would be prepared across the Dorset area, based on this earlier paper. The draft Statement of Common Ground was prepared by officers of the Dorset councils working together, and was discussed by the Strategic Planning Forum at its meeting in September 2018, where members agreed that the document would be brought to the individual councils for approval.
- 9 The Statement of Common Ground needs to be in place at the time of each local plan examination, and the first agreed Statement therefore needs to be in place in time for the submission of the Purbeck local plan review in February/March 2019. The draft Statement has already been published with the other supporting documents during the publication of the draft Purbeck local plan in October 2018.
- 10 The draft Statement will need to be reviewed regularly. In particular, it will be reviewed when any significant changes to local housing requirements are made, as this will affect the extent to which cooperation will be necessary to meet housing needs across the area. It will also need to be reviewed soon after its first publication in order to reflect the new council areas.

Implications

Corporate Plan

The Statement is required as part of the process of local plan preparation, which relates to the corporate plan priorities of helping to stimulate economic growth, increasing the number of new homes built, and safeguarding the natural and built environment.

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from the approval of the Statement.

Equalities

There are not considered to be any equalities implications from the approval of the Statement. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken on the local plans.

Environmental

Cooperation between the local planning authorities will include work on environmental matters such as the protection of the internationally important heathlands in Dorset. Environmental designations will be taken into account in considering the appropriate distribution of development.

Economic Development

Cooperation between the local planning authorities will include work on the identification of the appropriate locations for new housing and employment development to support economic growth.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

There is the risk of the Statement not being considered adequate on local plan examinations. In particular, there is a risk that councils may not be able to reach agreement, particularly if the housing needs of one area cannot be met there and need to be met in other council areas. Future versions of the Statement would need to record this position, and it would increase the risk of local plans not being found sound on examination.

Human Resources

The Statement has been prepared by officers of all the Dorset councils working together. It will continue to be reviewed by the officer group (the Strategic Planning Policy Managers' Forum) and brought to committees for approval.

Consultation and Engagement

The Statement has been through the Strategic Planning Forum for consideration prior to being brought to committees. There is no requirement for public consultation, though the involvement of a wider number of adjoining councils is likely to be required in future and this liaison will take place.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Statement of Common Ground

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

National Planning Practice Guidance 2018 (online)

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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